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Current Opinion

Who Is the Christian's God?

James Collier is one of those who assisted Herbert Spencer in preparing his *Descriptive Sociology*. While engaged in that work he became impressed with the fact that throughout the Middle Ages the real God whom the Christians worshiped was Christ, rather than the first person of the Trinity. In the July number of the *Hibbert Journal* Mr. Collier elaborates this thesis, tracing it through the great literature of Christianity. Almost without exception he finds that the really effective God is Christ. So in Paul and the church fathers, mediaeval Christian poets, the great theologians of the Roman church, and even many of the modern theologians. Augustine almost alone seems not to leave God the Father in the background and make Christ supreme. But this God of Christianity is not merely the Jesus of the synoptists. He is the risen Christ of Paul—to which fact Mr. Collier incidentally gives a Positivist turn by declaring that it is the spirit of man himself that is worshiped.

Mr. Collier has undoubtedly called attention to a real and important fact of Christian history. He might even have gone one step farther. For Dr. A. H. Strong in the preface of his recently published revision of his *Systematic Theology* declares that no one is entitled to the name of Christian who does not properly conceive of Christ—i. e., as one to whom prayers are to be addressed, who was and is omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent.

But there is a fair question as to Mr. Collier's treatment of Paul, for he has quite neglected the apostle's teaching as to the temporary character of the work of Christ, as preparatory to the time when God shall be all and in all.

And there is another consideration. A really careful study of the history of doctrine will show that while the church has steadily tended to erect Jesus into the position of the God who saves, at the same time there has been another strong tendency to conceive of God as the Absolute, increasingly out of touch with humanity. The Christ-God has been the center of soteriological thought, while the Absolute God is the center of theological thought. That is to say, Christ has been regarded as God "for practical purposes." The modern tendency to emphasize immanence is apparently a resultant of these two tendencies. The God resident in

humanity has been given the human qualities revealed in Christ. While the tendency which Mr. Collier has described was always in danger of running into ditheism, this newer conception of a God whose character is like Jesus, actually immanent in the world, avoids this danger and helps us to unify both our philosophical and our practical religious concepts.

The Original Ending of Mark's Gospel

An elaborate article in the *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* for July, 1907, by Hans Schmidt, of Breslau, considers the interesting and much-discussed question as to how Mark's Gospel originally closed. Schmidt thinks it certain that the gospel could not have ended where it now does at 16:8, and that what we know as 16:9-20 is a portion of some other primitive gospel which was used to piece out Mark's Gospel after its original ending had been lost. He then seeks to reconstruct the original ending by a careful comparison of the gospels of Matthew, Luke, and John, of Paul in I Corinthians 15:5-8, and of the account contained in the pseudonymous gospel of Peter. He concludes that the original close of Mark's Gospel began with a brief mention of the despair of the apostles, their return from Jerusalem to their home in Galilee, an appearance of Jesus to Peter while he was fishing on the Sea of Galilee, and lastly a second appearance to the twelve disciples, probably by the sea. Of the contents of this ending he feels considerable certainty; the wording of it is less certain, but is derived chiefly from the Gospel of John and the Gospel of Peter. We give the text reconstructed by Schmidt, and for the convenience of the reader an English translation of the text.

[Μκ. 16:8, καὶ ἐξελθούσαι ἔφυγον ἀπὸ τοῦ μνημείου, εἶχεν γὰρ αὐτὰς τρόμος καὶ ἔκστασις· καὶ οὐδενὶ οὐδὲν εἶπαν, ἐφοβοῦντο γάρ·] γενομένης δὲ τῆς τελευταίας τῶν ἁλζύμων πολλοὶ τινες ἐξήρχοντο ὑποστρέφοντες εἰς τοὺς οἴκους αὐτῶν τῆς ἑορτῆς παυσαμένης. Οἱ δὲ δώδεκα μαθηταὶ τοῦ κυρίου ἔκλαιον καὶ ἐλυποῦντο καὶ ἕκαστος λυπούμενος διὰ τὸ συμβᾶν ἀπηλλάγη εἰς τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ. ἦσαν ὁμοῦ Σίμων Πέτρος καὶ Ἀνδρέας ὁ ἀδελφὸς αὐτοῦ καὶ Λευεὶς ὁ τοῦ Ἀλφαίου, ὃν κύριος ἀπὸ τοῦ τελωνίου ἐκάλεσεν καὶ οἱ τοῦ Ζεβεδαίου καὶ ἄλλοι ἐκ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ δύο.¹ λέγει αὐτοῖς Σίμων Πέτρος· ὑπάγω ἀλιεύειν. λέγουσιν αὐτῷ· ἐρχόμεθα καὶ ἡμεῖς σὺν σοί. λαβόντες οὖν τὰ λῖνα αὐτῶν ἀπῆλθον εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ ἐνέβησαν εἰς τὸ πλοῖον, καὶ ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ νυκτὶ ἐπίασαν οὐδέν.² πρωίας δὲ ἦδη γινομένης ἔστη Ἰησοῦς εἰς τὸν αἰγιαλόν. οὐ μέντοι ᾔδεισαν οἱ μαθηταὶ ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστίν. λέγει οὖν αὐτοῖς Ἰησοῦς· παιδία, μὴ τι προσφάγιον ἔχετε; ἀπεκρίθησαν αὐτῷ· οὐ. ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· βάλετε

¹ Cf. Gosp. Pet., 12; John 21:2.

² Cf. Gosp. Pet., 12; John 21:3.

εἰς τὰ δεξιὰ μέρη τοῦ πλοίου τὸ δίκτυον καὶ εὐρήσετε. ἔβαλον οὖν, καὶ οὐκέτι αὐτὸ ἐλκύσαι ἴσχυον ἀπὸ τοῦ πλήθους τῶν ἰχθύων. λέγει οὖν μαθητῆς τις τῷ Πέτρῳ· ὁ κύριός ἐστιν. Σίμων οὖν Πέτρος ἀκούσας ὅτι ὁ κύριός ἐστιν, τὸν ἐπενδύτην διεζώσατο, ἣν γὰρ γυμνός, καὶ ἔβαλεν ἑαυτὸν εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν. οἱ δὲ ἄλλοι μαθηταὶ τῷ πλοιαρίῳ ἦλθον (οὐ γὰρ ἦσαν μακρὰν ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς ἀλλὰ ὡς ἀπὸ πηχῶν διακοσίων), σύροντες τὸ δίκτυον τῶν ἰχθύων.³ ἀνέβη οὖν Σίμων Πέτρος καὶ προσέπεσεν τοῖς γόνασιν Ἰησοῦ λέγων· ἔξελθε ἀπ' ἐμοῦ, ὅτι ἄνθρωπος ἁμαρτωλὸς εἰμι, κύριε. καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς τὸν Σίμωνα ὁ Ἰησοῦς· μὴ φοβοῦ. ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν ἀνθρώπους ἔσῃ ζωγρῶν.⁴ (Τοῦτο λαλήσας ἄφαντος ἐγένετο ἀπ' αὐτοῦ.)⁵ Καὶ καταγάγοντες τὸ πλοῖον ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν εἴλκυσαν τὸ δίκτυον εἰς τὴν γῆν μεστὸν ἰχθύων μεγάλων.⁶

Μετὰ ταῦτα ἐφάνερωσεν ἑαυτὸν πάλιν Ἰησοῦς τοῖς μαθηταῖς ἐπὶ τῆς θαλάσσης τῆς Τιβεριάδος. ἐφάνερωσεν δὲ οὕτως⁷ ὥς (οἱ δώδεκα) ἀπέβησαν εἰς τὴν γῆν βλέπουσιν ἀνθρακίαν κειμένην καὶ ὀψάριον ἐπικείμενον καὶ ἄρτον (καὶ εὐθὺς Ἰησοῦς ἔστη ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῶν). λέγει αὐτοῖς (ὁ Ἰησοῦς)· δεῦτε ἀριστήσατε· οὐδεὶς δὲ ἐτόλμα τῶν μαθητῶν ἐξετάσαι αὐτόν· σὺ τίς εἶ; εἰδότες ὅτι κύριός ἐστιν. ἔρχεται Ἰησοῦς καὶ λαμβάνει τὸν ἄρτον καὶ δίδωσιν αὐτοῖς καὶ τὸ ὀψάριον ὁμοίως. τοῦτο ἤδη τρίτον ἐφανερώθη Ἰησοῦς τοῖς μαθηταῖς ἐγερθεὶς ἐκ νεκρῶν.⁸

[Mark 16:8. And going forth they fled from the tomb, for fear and astonishment held them, and they told nothing to anyone for they were afraid.] And when it was the end of the days of unleavened bread many went away returning to their homes, for the feast was ended. But the twelve disciples of the Lord wept and mourned, and each one grieving on account of what had happened departed to his own home. There were together Simon Peter, and Andrew his brother, and Levi the son of Alphaeus whom the Lord called from the seat of toll, and the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. Simon Peter said to them, I go a fishing. They said to him, We also will go with thee. Taking, therefore, their nets they went away to the sea and entered into a boat, and that night they caught nothing. But when it was now early Jesus stood upon the shore. The disciples, however, did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus therefore said to them, Children, have ye anything to eat? They answered him, No. But he said to them, Cast your net upon the right side of the ship and you will find [fish]. They therefore cast their net and they were not able to draw it in on account of the multitude of fishes. Therefore a certain disciple said to Peter, It is the Lord. Simon Peter then, hearing that it was the Lord, girt his garment about him, for he was naked, and cast himself into the sea. But the other disciples came with the boat (for they were not far from the land, only about two hundred cubits), drawing the net of fish. Therefore Simon Peter came and prostrated himself

³ Cf. John 21:4-8.

⁴ Cf. Luke 5:8, 10^o.

⁵ Cf. Luke 24:31^o.

⁶ Cf. John 21:11.

⁷ Cf. John 21:1.

⁸ Cf. John 21:9, 12-14.

before Jesus saying, Depart from me because I am a sinful man, O Lord. And Jesus said to Simon, Fear not. From now on you shall be a fisher of men. (Saying this, he was no longer seen by him.) And bringing the ship to the land, they dragged the net full of fish up onto the shore.

After these things Jesus manifested himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and he manifested himself thus: When (the twelve) came to the land they saw a fire of coals made and fish thereupon and bread (and straightway Jesus stood in their midst). (Jesus) said to them, Come, eat. But no one of his disciples dared to ask him, Who art thou? for they knew that it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave to them, and the fish likewise. This was now the third time that Jesus manifested himself to his disciples after he had been raised from the dead.

Can We Restore Matthew's Logia?

A most interesting attempt has this year been made by Professor Harnack, in his *Sprüche und Reden Jesu*, to reconstruct the original Matthew document referred to in the Papias tradition, and commonly called the Logia. He regards this document as "a collection of discourses and sayings of Jesus, not arranged so as to lead up to the Passion, but having almost exclusively a Galilean horizon; a document free from special bias, whether apologetic, doctrinal, political, national, or anti-national" (p. 121). "That therefore which in the Synoptic Gospels, following the pattern set by Mark, is the principal thing—viz., the preparation for the Passion, the discourses which have the Passion for their theme, and finally the story of the Passion itself—all this so far as we can judge is entirely wanting in the Logia. In this lies the fundamental difference between the gospels and the Logia; it is not a gospel at all" (p. 120).

The contents of the Logia then are as follows, according to Harnack: It begins with the preaching of John, describes the baptism of Jesus and his temptation, then gives large portions of the Sermon on the Mount, then the stories of the centurion's servant, the missionary discourses to the disciples, the discourses about the Baptist and about Chorazin, the saying "I thank thee, Father," the discourses about Beelzebul and about Jonah, the woes upon the Pharisees, the warning about false Messiahs and about the coming of the Son of man as a thief in the night, and finally the sayings "He that hath, to him shall be given," and that the disciples shall rule the twelve tribes of Israel (p. 126).

Professor F. C. Burkitt, of Cambridge University, author of the recent fine work entitled *The Gospel History and Its Transmission*, referring to Harnack's monograph in the *Journal of Theological Studies* for April, criticizes Harnack's reconstruction. He says:

I venture to think there is a deep seated defect in Professor Harnack's method, and further that his restoration of the Logia is imperfect because he has attempted a task for which sufficient materials do not survive. . . . I cannot help wondering whether this venerable document may not have lost some of its more individual property in the process of reconstruction. First it was taken to pieces by Matthew and Luke, and now it has been put together again by Dr. Harnack. I find it very difficult to believe that it is all there, or even that enough is there to enable us to judge it as a literary whole. I have convinced myself that the Logia is a real "gospel," and that it contained a story of the Passion, and I still cling to my prejudices even after reading Harnack's arguments on the other side.

Is the Epistle to the Galatians the Earliest New Testament Book?

Several scholars have recently maintained that Paul's letter to the Galatians was the earliest to be written of all the New Testament writings. A little monograph, entitled *The Date of St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*, by Douglas Round (Cambridge University Press, 1906), is one of the recent contributions in support of this theory. Mr. Round works upon the basis of Ramsay's reconstruction of the Acts' history at this point, except that he departs from Ramsay's view regarding the date of the Galatian epistle. Round's view is that Paul wrote his letter to the Galatians at the close of his first missionary journey, in the year 49-50 A. D.

Upon the return of St. Paul and St. Barnabas to Antioch, we are told by St. Luke that "they tarried no little time with the disciples." Immediately afterwards is recorded the further fact that certain men having come down from Judaea were teaching the brethren, saying, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses ye cannot be saved." The hypothesis, then, which I hope to make good as a possible hypothesis, is that these men from Judaea had also sent on emissaries to the Galatian churches with the same teaching, and that such emissaries had been so far successful that a messenger from those churches reached St. Paul at Antioch with the sorrowful tidings that his Gentile converts in the churches of Galatia "were removing from him . . . unto a different gospel;" and that in consequence St. Paul at once wrote and sent to those churches the epistle which we are considering.

According to this view the conference between Paul and the "pillar apostles" described in Gal. 2:1-10 was a private conference held at the time of the visit mentioned in Acts 11:30, and the collision between Paul and Peter at Antioch (Gal. 2:11 ff.) followed soon upon Paul's return from the visit to Jerusalem mentioned in Acts 11:30. Then followed Paul's first missionary journey, then Paul's return to Antioch where he found that the Judaizers were at work among his Galatian churches, and he at once wrote his letter to nullify their influence. Then followed the conference at Jerusalem in 50 A. D. narrated in Acts 15:1 ff.

Mr. Round claims for this hypothesis the following advantages: (1) No visit of St. Paul to Jerusalem, nor anything vital to the question at issue, is omitted or suppressed; (2) the most forcible arguments that could be used at the time are used; (3) there is no inconsistency with the Acts of the Apostles; (4) every phrase which has any relation to or bearing on the question of the date is simply and naturally explained; (5) the authority of the Council at Jerusalem and of the Decree made by that Council remain unimpaired; (6) the epistle must have been written from Antioch or its neighborhood; (7) the churches of Galatia, to whom the epistle was addressed, must have been those of Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe; (8) the epistle is probably the earliest book in the New Testament.

There are many things to be said in defense of the commonly accepted interpretation of this portion of history of the Apostolic Age, and in opposition to this theory proposed by Mr. Round. But the problem is an open one, and Mr. Round's arguments deserve consideration.

Among the many new courses of modern Bible study that are constantly appearing from the press, one of special excellence is that by Professor W. J. Mutch, now of Ripon College, Wisconsin, upon, "Samuel, Saul, and David." The material is arranged in thirty sections, or studies, to occupy about one year of work. The entire material of the books of Samuel is included in the course. The method is a combination of paragraphs of useful information, with questions for study and for thought. The paragraphs are numbered for convenience of reference, 211 in all, covering 144 pages of printed material, with very wide margins for pupils' notes. The point of view of the course and the principles of historical interpretation pursued by Professor Mutch are those which commend themselves to the best scholars. The studies would serve as a capital guide to a year's thorough and careful research in the history of this towering trio of Old Testament heroes, Samuel, Saul, and David.